



Fitness Forum



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Vacation Fitness

Summer is here and it's time to take the family on vacation, but it's not time to take a break from your fitness program. Vacations are a good time to involve the whole family in an active way of life. Have each member of the family plan an event in which everyone participates. While workouts may not be the same on vacation, there are numerous opportunities to maintain a fitness routine.

The first place to start your vacation fitness plan is traveling to your destination whether it be by plane, train, car or bus. Take every opportunity to get up and walk. Do some easy stretching movements in your seat or the aisle to prevent your muscles from becoming stiff and sore. Some suggestions include neck rolls, shoulder shrugs and ankle circles.



When traveling by car, stop frequently. The whole family can participate in a mini-workout. Light calisthenics will get the circulation going. Jogging in place, jumping jacks and knee lifts are some suggestions. Or take a brisk walk around a rest stop or a town that you are passing through. Take a few minutes to do some stretching movements before getting on the road again.

It may be impractical to try to maintain your normal exercise routine on vacation. Jogging in a strange place, the unavailability of a pool or your bicycle, no place to take an exercise class and the lack of time can contribute to an interruption in your normal schedule. Here are some suggestions to assist you in planning an enjoyable vacation program:

Cabins, tents and hotel rooms can be used to set-up a mini-workout circuit. Some exercise suggestions include situps, pushups, side leg raises, bicep curls, heel raises (using a telephone book), and toe raises.

Bring along a cassette player and your favorite aerobic music. You can put on your favorite tape and continue your exercise routine. Or you might want to take it to the pool and try the routine in the water. Also many hotels have cable television. Some cable channels offer a variety of fitness classes.

Walking for fitness can be incorporated into busy days and the whole family can participate. It requires only comfortable shoes and clothing. Many places have beautiful trails and some cities have walking tours through historical districts. Briskly walk from one marker to the next, read about it, and briskly walk to the next one.

Cycling individually or as a family is also a possibility. Many vacation places rent bicycles of all types if you are unable to take yours with you. Take this opportunity to go trail riding. Take the family and pack a snack or picnic lunch to enjoy along the way or try riding a tandem bike.

Day hikes are an enjoyable way to see the parks and forests that many states offer. Be sure to have sturdy shoes that you previously have worn and take along a pack to carry water and a snack. Many parks offer a variety of trails of varying difficulty. Start with an easy trail and then try one that is more challenging.

Remember that the environment you encounter on vacation may be very different from home. Exercising at altitude is very different from sea level, while temperature and humidity may also affect your physical abilities. Start slowly and adjust the pace and length of your workout to fit how you feel. Be sure to take clothing that is appropriate for the area you are visiting. It may be hot and humid at home but cool and windy in the mountains you are visiting.

Be creative on vacation. Try new activities and involve your whole family in an active lifestyle. You'll have more vacation fun that way.